

SUCCESS STORY

Trow and Holden

Vermont Manufacturing Extension Center

"VMEC has consistently proven to be the best resource for fostering significant and lasting change in our company. From Lean manufacturing techniques to enterprise-wide pull systems, we count on VMEC to help us assess, plan for and implement some of the manufacturing world's best practices." Norm Akley, President

ExporTech Gives Tool Maker More Export Sales

ABOUT. Trow & Holden (T&H) Company, established in 1890 in Barre, Vermont, manufactures a wide range of hand tools and pneumatics for stoneworking. Their customer base is stone masons, sculptors and restoration professionals who want to produce the highest quality stonework. They forge, machine, heat treat and finish all tools from U.S.-sourced materials, manufacturing nearly 550 original parts, including nearly 500 finished products. Among the first to introduce carbide-tipped stoneworking tools, T&H is one of two domestic and one of six international tool manufacturers servicing global markets. T&H has 20 full-time skilled workers.

THE CHALLENGE. Heading into the 21st century, T&H saw a slow decline in their business growth with a more than 30% contraction in sales over several years. Over the past few years, the company has averaged over 4% growth each year. Exports consistently account for 20% of gross annual sales. Exporting to 55 countries through an international and distributor model as well as direct retail sales, T&H sought an avenue to stay on track for necessary future growth in their strong exporting market.

MEP'S ROLE. Having worked with VMEC, a NIST MEP affiliate, in the past on various projects, the company considered the newly introduced ExporTech program for VT companies as a logical route to future international growth. T&H sent two employees to this first-ever VT-based program. The employees then were directly involved in the hands-on implementation of growing exporting sales to existing export countries and new markets. They identified several ways to boost growth in established secondary markets (UK, Mexico, France, and Germany) and identified new areas for expansion.



RESULTS



30% growth in key export markets targeted in 5 years



15% sales increase to their Norwegian distributor



Established a relationship with a Taiwanese distributor resulting in a significant initial purchase

NEXT STEPS



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